

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Child and Family Services Reviews Stakeholder Interview Guide

February 2003

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau**

Stakeholder interviews are conducted at the local review sites and at the State level during the onsite component of the child and family services reviews. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews is to collect information for evaluating and rating the systemic factors that are examined during the child and family services reviews.

The review team interviews stakeholders who are representative of the types of organizations and individuals who participated in the development of the State's Child and Family Services Plan, as required at 45 Code of Federal Regulations 1357.15(1). These include representatives of courts, administrative review bodies, children's guardians ad litem, and other individuals or bodies assigned responsibility for representing the best interests of children. The following core stakeholders must be interviewed:

State Stakeholders

State child welfare director
State child welfare program specialists
State court system representative(s)
Major tribal representatives
State representative(s) of administrative review bodies
Youth being served by the agency
State foster and/or adoptive parent association representatives

Local Stakeholders

Local child welfare agency administrator
Foster and adoptive parent(s)
Juvenile court judge
Caseworker(s) from the local agency
Supervisor(s) from the local agency
Guardians ad litem/legal representatives
Agency attorney(s)
Local representatives of administrative review bodies
Tribal representatives
Youth being served by the local site office

Review teams may interview additional stakeholders at both the State and local levels, as needed; see the *Child and Family Services Reviews Procedures Manual* for a listing.

Instructions for Using the Stakeholder Interview Guide

- This interview guide identifies the core question(s) to be asked at each stakeholder interview. The identified core question(s) listed by item number represent the central theme(s) for each systemic issue that the reviewer should attempt to address during stakeholder interviews. The ratings that the review team assigns to the systemic factors should be based on thorough explanations of and responses to the core questions.
- While each individual stakeholder may not be able to answer every core question, reviewers should be able to elicit all the needed information from the range of stakeholders interviewed at the State and local site levels. Following each item is a list of possible stakeholders who may be able to address the core question(s). Reviewers, however, will need to make judgments about which of the questions they should pursue with each individual stakeholder.

- Each core question is followed by exploratory questions that reviewers should use as appropriate (to the stakeholder and the situation) during the interviews. The exploratory questions guide reviewers to determine the most appropriate response to the core question(s). Reviewers should be prepared to rephrase the exploratory questions, or ask related questions, to explore the core question(s) fully, for example, by asking “why” or “why not,” as appropriate.
- In addition to the core questions and exploratory questions, the Administration for Children and Families Regional Office Team Leader, in collaboration with the State and the Children's Bureau, will identify State-specific issues from the Statewide Assessment that need further examination through stakeholder interviews; these will then be listed in Section II of the interview guide.
- **Reviewers should be careful to pursue issues only with stakeholders who have firsthand knowledge of the issue under review. The information recorded on the Stakeholder Interview Guide, and therefore subsequently used to evaluate the agency's performance, should reflect the input of stakeholders with firsthand, well-founded knowledge of the issue. (Some stakeholders may offer secondhand experience or express opinions that are not supported by facts or experience; this information should not be recorded on the interview guide.)**
- Interviews should be limited to approximately 1 hour. Reviewers should become thoroughly familiar with the core questions and exploratory questions in the Stakeholder Interview Guide before beginning the stakeholder interviews. Reviewers should note that stakeholders may provide information out of sequence from the order of the Stakeholder Interview Guide.
- The Local Site Leaders or their designee should record the notes from all the stakeholder interviews in the appropriate blank spaces on the Stakeholder Interview Guide. Preferably, reviewers will use a single Stakeholder Interview Guide, adding pages as needed to record notes under each section of the guide. Local Site Leaders must turn into their Team Leader one completed Stakeholder Interview Guide for their site, which includes information learned from all of the stakeholders interviewed during the onsite review.
- In order to identify which stakeholders made specific comments, reviewers should assign a number to each stakeholder (or stakeholder group) interviewed in the list of stakeholders that follows. Reviewers can then record this number next to comments in the body of the Stakeholder Interview Guide.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW GUIDE

A. Interviewer(s):

B. Date(s) of Interviews:

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*See instructions on previous page

Section I: Safety Outcomes for Children

Safety Outcome 1: Children Are, First and Foremost, Protected From Abuse and Neglect. (Items 1–2)

Item 1: Timeliness of Initiating Investigations of Reports of Child Maltreatment (Caseworkers, Agency Administrators, Law Enforcement)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment in a timely manner, including at night and on weekends?

Exploratory Question:

- What practice(s) enable the agency to respond to reports of maltreatment in a timely manner?
- What are the barriers to the agency responding in a timely manner?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 2: Repeat Maltreatment (Caseworkers, Agency Administrators, Law Enforcement, Administrative Review Bodies, Courts)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency identify risk factors that might lead to children being maltreated or to the recurrence of maltreatment, and is this approach effective?
- What policies and practices are effective in preventing the recurrence of maltreatment?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Safety Outcome 2: Children Are Safely Maintained in Their Homes Whenever Possible and Appropriate. (Items 3–4)

Item 3: Services to Family To Protect Child(ren) in Home and Prevent Removal (Caseworkers, Service Providers, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in providing services, when appropriate, to prevent removing children from their homes?

Exploratory Question:

- What facilitates providing preventive and protective services, or what are the barriers to the provision of these services?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 4: Risk of Harm to Child(ren) (Caseworkers, Service Providers, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Youth Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in reducing the risk of harm to children, including those in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency ensure that safety and risk of harm issues are assessed continually while families receive services and at key decisionmaking points throughout the case (for example, at the point of reunification or case closure)?
- What are the agency's interventions to protect children from maltreatment, and are they effective (for example, is the State taking the appropriate and necessary actions to protect children)?
- How does the agency ensure that children remain safe after they are placed in foster care, and is this approach effective?
- How effectively does the agency screen incoming reports of suspected child maltreatment to determine what response it will make?
- How does the agency handle additional reports of suspected child maltreatment for cases already being investigated or open for services?

[illegible]

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Section II: Permanency Outcomes for Children

Permanency Outcome 1: Children Have Permanency and Stability in Their Living Situations.
(Items 5–10)

Item 5: Foster Care Re-Entries (Caseworkers, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in preventing multiple entries of children into foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- What factors contribute to children re-entering foster care?
- Are there barriers to helping children remain in stable living arrangements after discharge from foster care? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 6: Stability of Foster Care Placement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Youth Representatives, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in providing placement stability for children in foster care (that is, minimizing placement changes for children in foster care)?

Exploratory Questions:

- How often do children in foster care change placements?
- What contributes to placement changes?
- Are initial shelter or other temporary placements routinely used?
- Are there barriers to helping children remain in stable placements while in foster care? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 7: Permanency Goal for Child (Caseworkers, Supervisors, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in determining the appropriate permanency goals for children on a timely basis when they enter foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- How effective and timely is the agency in determining that the goals of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives are not appropriate for children?
- What factors affect the agency's ability to set timely and appropriate permanency goals?
- Are there barriers to setting appropriate permanency goals in a timely manner? If so, please describe.
- How does the agency make decisions about changing the permanency goal that is in effect for a child in foster care?
- Does the agency engage in concurrent planning (working toward two different goals, such as adoption and reunification, simultaneously)? What are the results of this approach?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 8: Reunification, Guardianship, or Permanent Placement With Relatives (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Tribal Representatives, Administrative Review Bodies, Supervisors)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in helping children in foster care return safely to their families when appropriate?

Exploratory Questions:

- Which practices or policies promote timely reunification with parents; are they effective?
- Are there barriers to timely reunification with parents? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 9: Adoption (Caseworkers, Pre-Adoptive Parents, Supervisors, Adoption Program Specialists, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies, Tribal Representatives, Youth Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in achieving timely (within 24 months or less) adoption when that is appropriate for a child?

Exploratory Questions:

- What policies or practices are effective in achieving timely adoption?
- Are there barriers to achieving timely adoptions? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 10: Permanency Goal of Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Supervisors, Youth Representatives, Guardians Ad Litem, Courts)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in establishing planned permanent living arrangements for children in foster care, who do not have the goal of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or permanent placement with relatives?

Exploratory Questions:

- How effectively is the agency using the goal of other planned permanent living arrangement to meet the needs of children in foster care with this goal?
- For children with this permanency goal, is the agency providing services consistent with the goal?
- How effective is the agency in helping children achieve independence?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Permanency Outcome 2: The Continuity of Family Relationships and Connections Is Preserved for Children. (Items 11–16)

Item 11: Proximity of Foster Care Placement (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Courts, Supervisors, Agency Administrators, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in placing foster children close to their birth parents or their own communities or counties?

Exploratory Questions:

- What practices does the agency engage in to place children in foster care in their own communities or counties?
- Under what circumstances does the agency place children out of State?
- Are there barriers to achieving community-based placements? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 12: Placement With Siblings (Caseworkers, Supervisors, Foster Parents, Courts, Guardians Ad Litem, Administrative Review Bodies, Youth Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in keeping brothers and sisters together in foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- What process does the agency use to place brothers and sisters together in foster care?
- Are there barriers to placing brothers and sisters together? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 13: Visiting With Parents and Siblings in Foster Care (Caseworkers, Youth Representatives, Supervisors, Foster Parents)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in planning and facilitating visiting of children in foster care with their parents and siblings placed separately in foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- How often and under what circumstances are children in foster care able to visit their families?
- Where do the visits occur?
- Are there barriers to visits between children in foster care and parents or siblings placed separately in foster care? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 14: Preserving Connections (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives, Service Providers, Tribal Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in preserving important connections for children in foster care, such as connections to neighborhood, community, faith, family, and friends?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency determine what connections a child has that need attention and preservation while in foster care?
- What does the agency do to help preserve children's important connections?
- How does the agency comply with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) provisions concerning notification of tribes, observing placement preferences, and working with tribes and courts around decisions for Native American children in foster care?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 15: Relative Placement (Caseworkers, Youth Representatives, Courts, Supervisors)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in identifying relatives who could care for children entering foster care, and using them as placement settings when appropriate?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency seek out relatives, including fathers not in the home and paternal relatives, and use them as placement resources for children?
- Are there barriers to identifying and using relatives as placements for children in foster care? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 16: Relationship of Child in Care With Parents (Foster Parents, Service Providers, Youth Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in promoting or helping to maintain the parent-child relationship for children in foster care, when it is appropriate to do so?

Exploratory Question:

- What kinds of activities does the agency engage in to support parent-child relationships in foster care?
- Are there barriers to promoting the parent-child relationship for children in foster care? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Section III: Child and Family Well-Being

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families Have Enhanced Capacity To Provide for Their Children's Needs. (Items 17–20)

Item 17: Needs and Services of Child, Parents, Foster Parents (Foster Parents, Service Providers, Caseworkers, Supervisors)

Core Questions:

- How effective is the agency in assessing the needs of children, parents, and foster parents?
- How effective is the agency in providing needed services to children in foster care, to their parents and foster parents, and children and families receiving inhome services?

Exploratory Questions:

- Is there a formal assessment process? If so, please describe the process for conducting formal assessments, including who conducts them.
- How do caseworkers assess the needs of children, parents, and foster parents?
- When do caseworkers assess the needs of children and families (ongoing or at specific intervals)?
- How are needs assessments used in developing case plans (for example, are the services provided to children and families addressing the needs identified through formal and informal assessments)?
- Are there barriers to assessing needs? If so, please describe.
- How do caseworkers determine which services are needed?
- Are there barriers to providing services? If so, please describe.
- How does the agency routinely assess and provide services for all youth (age 16 and older) to prepare them to be independent, regardless of their permanency goal; is this effective?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 18: Child and Family Involvement in Case Planning (Caseworkers, Pre-Adoptive Parents, Service Providers, Supervisors, Youth Representatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in involving parents and children in the case planning process?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency engage children, parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers in case planning activities, such as identifying strengths and needs, determining goals and services needed, evaluating progress?
- Are there barriers to involving them in the case planning process? If so, please describe.
- How often are fathers, or absent parents, involved in case planning activities?
- What efforts are made by the agency to locate and involve fathers if they are not in the home?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 19: Worker Visits With Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives, Supervisors)

Core Question:

- How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with children in foster care and those who receive services in their own homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How often do caseworkers see the children on their caseloads?
- How do caseworkers determine how frequently they should see children?
- Is there a difference in the frequency of caseworker visits with the children in foster care and children receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.
- How sufficient is the frequency and quality of the visits?
- Are there barriers to the frequency and quality of agency workers' visits with children? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 20: Worker Visits With Parents (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Supervisors, Contract Service Providers)

Core Question:

- How effective are agency workers in conducting face-to-face visits as often as needed with parents of children in foster care and parents of children receiving inhome services?

Exploratory Questions:

- How often do caseworkers see the parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers of children on their caseloads?
- How do caseworkers determine how often they need to see the parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers?
- Is there a difference in the frequency of caseworker visits with the parents of children in foster care and children receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.
- How sufficient are the frequency and quality of the visits?
- Are there barriers to the frequency and quality of agency workers' visits with parents? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

**Well-Being Outcome 2: Children Receive Appropriate Services To Meet Their Educational Needs.
(Item 21)**

Item 21: Educational Needs of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Youth Representatives, Educational Representatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in addressing the educational needs of children in foster care and those receiving services in their own homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency identify and address the educational needs of children?
- Is there a difference in how caseworkers address the educational needs for children in foster care and children receiving inhome services? If so, please describe.
- Are there barriers to the agency identifying and addressing the educational needs of children? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children Receive Adequate Services To Meet Their Physical and Mental Health Needs. (Items 22–23)

Item 22: Physical Health of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Service Providers, Youth Representatives, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in identifying and addressing the physical health and medical needs, including dental needs, of children receiving inhome and foster care services?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency identify and address the physical health and medical needs of children?
- Are there barriers to the agency addressing the physical health and medical needs of children? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 23: Mental Health of the Child (Caseworkers, Foster Parents, Service Providers, Courts, Administrative Review Bodies, Youth Representatives)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in identifying and addressing the emotional and mental health needs of children receiving inhome and foster care services?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency identify and address the emotional and mental health needs of children?
- Are there barriers to the agency addressing the emotional and mental health needs of children? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Section IV: Statewide Information System

Item 24

Item 24: State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. (State and County Agency Staff)

Core Question:

- How effective is the State's information system in readily identifying the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- How accurate are the data produced on these indicators?
- What are the gaps in the information system from the State and local perspectives, and what types of additional information should the system capture in order to determine the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for all children in foster care?
- How uniform is the State's information system capacity on a statewide basis?
- How accessible is the information in the system to staff, supervisors, managers, and administrators, that is, how quickly can the information be provided?
- Are there barriers to accessing information from the system? If so, please describe.
- How accurately does the information system provide information on the location of children in foster care, including the status of children who have runaway or have been abducted while under the State's responsibility?
- How current are the data reported by the information system?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Section V: Case Review System

Items 25–29

Item 25: Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child’s parent(s) that includes the required provisions. (State and County Agency Staff, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies, Quality Assurance Staff)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in developing written case plans jointly with the child’s parents?

Exploratory Questions:

- Do all children have current case plans?
- How are case plans developed, and who participates in developing them (for example, children, parents, foster parents)?
- In what specific ways are parents, pre-adoptive parents, and permanent relative or guardian caregivers involved in developing case plans?
- When and how are case plans updated?
- How are case plans used to guide the actual work that occurs with children and families?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

<p>Item 26: Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review. (State and County Agency Staff, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)</p>

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in conducting the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review?

Exploratory Questions:

- What procedures are in place for conducting the periodic reviews for children in foster care?
- Do the reviews occur on a timely basis? If not, what are the barriers?
- Who participates in the review and what is their role (for example, children, parents, foster and preadoptive parents, and others)?
- How effective are the periodic reviews in promoting permanency for all children in foster care, including children in relative placements?

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[illegible]

Item 27: Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter. (State and County Agency Staff, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in ensuring that each child in foster care has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter?

Exploratory Questions:

- What procedures are in place for permanency hearings for children in foster care?
- Who conducts the hearings?
- Do the hearings occur on a timely basis?
- Who participates in the hearings? Children? Parents? Foster and preadoptive parents? Others?
- How effective are the hearings in promoting permanency for children in foster care, including children in relative placements?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 28: Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in providing a process for termination of parental rights for children in foster care, in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency identify children who have been in foster care for 15 of the past 22 months?
- How effective is the agency in pursuing termination of parental rights (TPR) for children who have been in foster care for at least 15 of the past 22 months?
- Under what circumstances are exceptions made to the TPR requirements?
- How are exceptions reviewed and documented?
- Are there barriers to the agency pursuing or the court granting TPRs? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 29: Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Selected Local External Stakeholders, for Example, Foster Parents, Courts, Attorneys, Advocates, Administrative Review Bodies)

Core Question:

- How effective is the agency in ensuring that foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care receive notice of reviews or hearings held with respect to the child in their care, and have an opportunity to be heard?

Exploratory Questions:

- How are foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers notified of reviews or hearings?
- Does notification occur on a regular basis or are there barriers to notification?
- How often do caretakers actually attend and participate in reviews or hearings?
- To what extent are foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers provided an opportunity to be heard in reviews or hearings?
- Are there barriers to the opportunity to be heard? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Section VI: Quality Assurance System

Items 30–31

Item 30: The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children. (State and County Agency Staff, External Stakeholders, Foster Parents, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- In what ways has the State developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect their safety and health?

Exploratory Questions:

- Does the agency have standards that address the health and safety of children in foster care placements in addition to its licensing standards for foster family homes and other placement facilities, particularly residential care facilities?
- How effective are these standards, if they are in place?
- Are there areas in which these standards need to be developed or improved?
- What services are in place to protect the health and safety of children in foster care placements, and are these services effective?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 31: The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented. (State and County Agency Staff, Quality Assurance Staff, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- To what extent does the State operate an identifiable quality assurance system that evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency monitor the quality of its work and the outcomes for children and families, beyond frontline supervision; is the process effective?
- What constitutes the quality assurance system?
- Does the quality assurance system operate on a statewide basis? If not, in which jurisdictions does it operate?
- What reports does the quality assurance system produce?
- How does the agency use the information obtained from quality assurance activities to guide agency programs, policies, and practices, and is this approach effective?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

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Section VII: Training

Items 32–34

Item 32: The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Service Providers, Tribal Representatives, Local External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- How effective is the State in providing *initial* training for all staff who provide child welfare services?

Exploratory Issues:

- Does the agency have an overall training plan?
- How does the agency provide preservice or initial training for State child welfare staff, and is this approach effective?
- At what point is the initial training provided (for example, before a caseworker receives a caseload)?
- What types of initial training are provided?
- How adequately does the training address the skills needed by staff to do their jobs?
- Are there barriers to staff members receiving or using this training? If so, please describe.

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 33: The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Service Providers, Tribal Representatives, Local External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- How effective is the State in providing *ongoing* training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency assess/identify the training needs of staff?
- How does the agency provide ongoing training to State child welfare staff?
- At what points are the ongoing training provided (for example, on a monthly basis)?
- What types of ongoing training are provided and is ongoing training required?
- Does the agency provide opportunities for staff to pursue professional education (for example, educational leave)?
- How adequately does the ongoing training address the skills and knowledge that staff need to do their jobs?
- Are there barriers to staff receiving ongoing training? If so, please describe.

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 34: The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children. (State and County Agency Staff, Foster and Pre-Adoptive Parents, Local External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- How effective is the State in providing training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State-licensed or approved facilities that addresses the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their duties?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency provide preservice or initial training for foster and adoptive parents?
- How does the agency provide advanced or ongoing training for foster and adoptive parents?
- How effectively does the training prepare foster or adoptive parents to care for the children in their homes?
- Are all foster and adoptive parents trained?
- How does the agency ensure that training is provided for the staff of State-licensed or -approved child care facilities?
- Have all such staff received training?
- Are there barriers to the state providing training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, or staff of State-licensed or -approved facilities? If so, please describe.

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Section VIII: Service Array

Items 35–37

Item 35: The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and adoptive placements achieve permanency. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance Representatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Advocates, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- How responsive is the State’s array of services to the needs of the children and families it serves, including in-home and foster care services?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency provide services to protect children in their own homes; and is that process effective?
- How does the agency provide services to promote timely reunification of children in foster care with their families; and is that process effective?
- How does the agency provide services to promote timely adoptions and support for adoptive families after placement and finalization of the adoption; and is that process effective?
- How does the agency provide services to youth in foster care to prepare them for independent living and to make the transition from foster care to adulthood; and is that process effective?
- Are there gaps in the State’s service array and, if so, what are they?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 36: The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State's CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance Representatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Advocates, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- To what extent are services accessible to families and children in all jurisdictions in the State?

Exploratory Questions:

- How accessible are the services to the children and families?
- Are there barriers to accessibility (for example, location, cost, waiting lists, availability of providers)? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 37: The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency. (State and County Agency Staff, Courts, Quality Assurance Representatives, Youth Representatives, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Advocates, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- How effectively does the agency individualize, or tailor, services to the unique needs of children and families?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency tailor services to meet the unique, individualized needs of the children and families it serves?
- Are flexible funds available to obtain unique or individualized services?
- Are there barriers to individualizing services? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Section IX: Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Items 38–40

Item 38: In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives, Advocates, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- To what extent does the State engage in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies in order to include these stakeholders' major concerns in its State plan?

<p>Exploratory Question:</p>

- How effectively does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the State's child welfare goals and objectives?
- How broad is the array of stakeholders with whom the State consults about its plans, goals, and objectives?
- How does the agency use the information and input from stakeholders in key decisions and plans?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 39: The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Service Providers, Other Agency Representatives, Advocates, External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- To what extent does the agency develop, in consultation with the individuals or organizations identified in item 38, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the State's title IV-B State plan?

Exploratory Question:

- How effectively and to what extent does the agency involve external stakeholders in developing the Annual Progress and Services Reports?
- Who is involved in the development process?
- How does the State use the information obtained from stakeholders in the Annual Progress and Services Reports?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 40: The State’s services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population. (State and County Agency Staff, Tribal Representatives, Other Agency Representatives [for example, Education, Mental Health, Health], External Stakeholders)

Core Question:

- To what extent are the State's services coordinated with the services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population?

Exploratory Questions:

- How are services to children and families coordinated with other Federal or federally assisted programs in the State?
- Are there barriers to coordinating these services? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Section X: Foster and Adoptive Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Items 41–45

Item 41: The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- To what extent has the State implemented licensing or approval standards for foster family homes and child care institutions that ensure the safety and health of children in foster care?

Exploratory Questions:

- How do the agency's licensing standards ensure the safety and protection of children in foster care?
- How effectively do the agency's licensing standards address issues such as admission policies, safety, sanitation, and protection of civil rights?
- What are the agency's procedures for relicensing foster homes?
- How effective is the agency in relicensing or reinspecting homes on a timely basis to assure conformity with its licensing standards?

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 42: The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- To what extent are foster care standards applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV-E or IV-B funds?

Exploratory Question:

- Does the agency apply the same standards equally to all licensed or approved foster homes, including relative and nonrelative homes?
- Are there provisions whereby States may place children in homes that are not fully licensed or approved? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 43: The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- Does the State conduct criminal background clearances on prospective foster and adoptive parents before licensing or approving them to care for children?

Exploratory Questions:

- What is the agency's process for conducting background clearances?
- How effective is this process in screening out prospective caretakers with criminal backgrounds?
- Are there barriers associated with this activity? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Item 44: The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- To what extent has the State put in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children needing foster and adoptive homes?

Exploratory Questions:

- How adequate is the county's (State's) current pool of foster families in meeting the family-based foster care placement needs of the children it serves?
- How adequate is the county's (State's) current pool of adoptive families in meeting the adoption placement needs of the children it serves?
- How does the agency recruit foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in need of placement in the State; is the recruitment effective?
- How does the State monitor the supply of homes to ensure the number and type correspond to the number and characteristics of the children in care needing placement?
- Are there sufficient staff resources available to perform recruitment functions?
- What initiatives, programs, and services are in place to assist in the retention of foster and adoptive homes?

ID Number	Interviewee Comments

[illegible]

Item 45: The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children. (State and County Agency Staff [particularly Licensing Staff and Supervisors], Agency Administrators, Selected Stakeholders; for example, Foster Parents, Court Personnel, Service Providers)

Core Question:

- How effectively does the State recruit and use families who live in other jurisdictions, (for example, out of State), to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children?

Exploratory Questions:

- How does the agency recruit and use adoptive families from across State lines or other jurisdictions?
- How does the agency use available resources, such as adoption exchanges, for placing children for adoption in other jurisdictions?
- Are there barriers to inter-jurisdictional adoptions? If so, please describe.

[illegible]

[illegible]

State-Specific Issues

Core Question:

Exploratory Questions:

[illegible]

ID Number	Interviewee Comments